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**CONGO
FIRESIDE
TALES**



Congo fireside tales. Illustrated by Joshua Tolford.

Savory, Phyllis.

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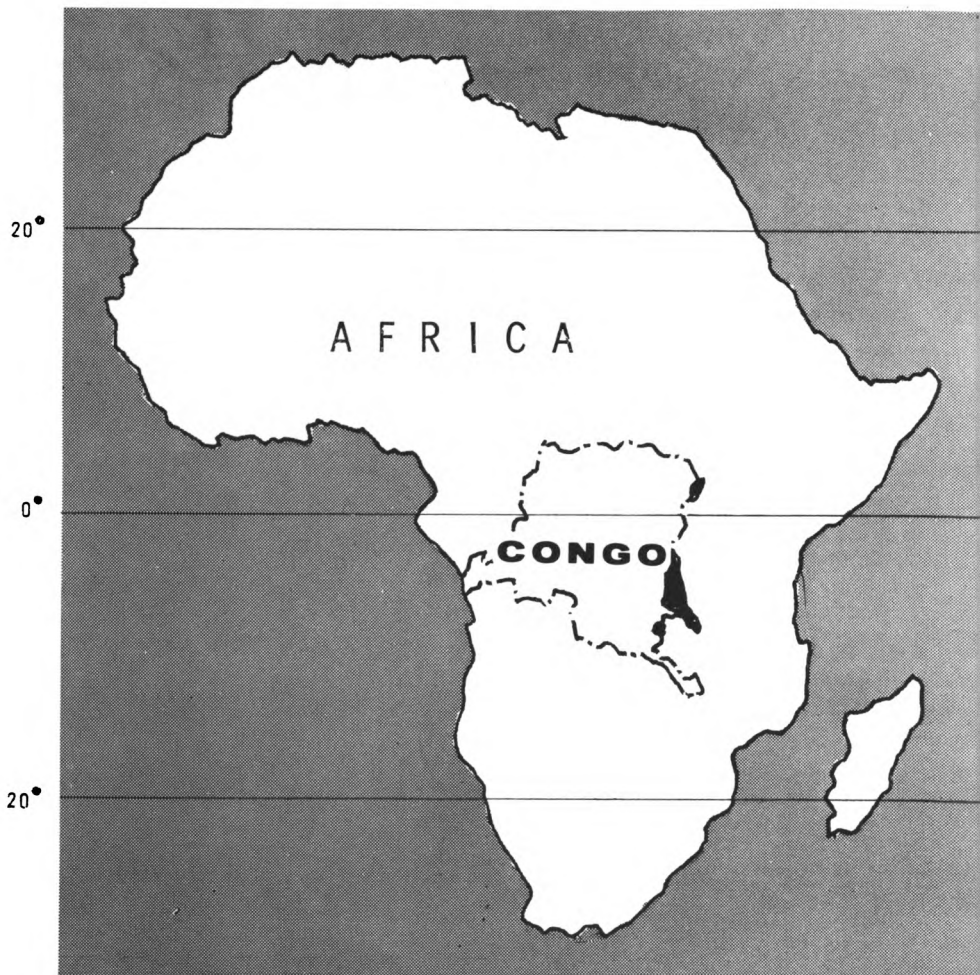
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CONGO

FIRESIDE

TALES

BY PHYLLIS SAVORY

Illustrated by Joshua Tolford

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HASTINGS HOUSE, Publishers • *New York 22*

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CONTENTS

Note by the Author	7
<i>The Hare and the Elephant</i>	9
<i>A Bride for the Hare</i>	14
<i>The Hare and the Reedbuck</i>	19
<i>The Lion, the Hare and the Eland</i>	25
<i>The Elephant, the Hare and the Leopard</i>	30
<i>The Antelopes' Convention</i>	34
<i>The Lion and the Robin</i>	38
<i>Kalulu, the Clever One</i>	44
<i>The Magic Anthill</i>	48
<i>The Tale of the Golden Birds</i>	54
<i>The Blind Man and the Tortoise</i>	62
<i>Musakalala, the Talking Skull</i>	68
<i>How the Beggar Boy won the Chief's Daughter</i>	72
<i>Umusha Mwaice, the Little Slave Girl</i>	76
Glossary	87

TO MY VERY DEAR NIECE MARYLEE,
*in gratitude for her unselfish help
in the collection of these tales.*

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NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

IN THE CENTRAL PART OF THE continent of Africa, between the latitude of 4 degrees North and 12 degrees South, is a vast wild country which until quite lately was known as the Belgian Congo. Today it is the Congo Republic.

In this area live many tribes of black people, and wild animals both large and small abound. Not so long ago it was called "Darkest Africa," meaning that little was known about it and its inhabitants. In fact, it is still the wildest and most uncivilized part of this great continent.

In centuries past, before civilization of any kind had come their way, the tribes in the Congo like others in Africa depended upon imaginative tales to fill in the hours of darkness before they slept. These were usually told around the open fires in their huts.

Sometimes their tales were of fellow human beings who were able to change at will from man to beast and back from beast to man. Sometimes they were of creatures of the wilds that talked and thought and acted as men. In this respect they resemble folk tales of other countries.

In another respect, however, they are sometimes different.

In Africa's unenlightened days cannibalism was regularly indulged in in certain areas, and even today it appears occasionally as part of some ritual practises. That, too, appears in this book, for to omit it would be to give a one-sided view of these powerful native stories. However, American and European readers would do well to remember the *Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum* element in many of our own beloved tales before being critical, and to recognize the other more pleasant points of similarity – for instance, the hare in these chapters resembles Joel Chandler Harris's *B'r'er Rabbit*, and there is a strong likeness to *Cinderella* in the royal princess of *Umusha Mwaice* who was so ill-treated by her stepsisters. To be sure *Cinderella* didn't carve up one of them to serve to her stepmother as a tasty piece of revenge but then she might have wanted to all the time!

↙ In other words, in Africa folk tales unfold with primitive gusto. When told orally, they were and still are tailored to the audience in question, as is the practise of storytellers the world over. My tales are meant for universal enjoyment by both adults and children; hence I have tried to keep the horror element down but not to the point where the tales lose their intrinsic African character.

I realize that to the European or American some of these tales are strange indeed but when reading them one must remember, as I have said, that the uncivilized people who evolved them had nothing but the wilds of nature around them, so their interest was entirely confined to the people and animals among whom they lived.

* * *

With the coming of education, radio and TV these old folk tales are fast disappearing. I have been fortunate in being able to collect several volumes of them from the native storytellers, who are the last of their kind. *ZULU FIRESIDE TALES* was published last year by Hastings House in New York and Timmins & Co., Ltd., in Cape Town, South Africa. *MATEBELE* (Rhodesia) *FIRESIDE TALES* is in preparation.



THE HARE AND THE ELEPHANT

ONE DAY the hare, feeling very hungry, went to look for food. Now, besides being full of mischief, he was very lazy, and whenever he could manage to do so, he took the easy way of life and let others toil, while he benefitted by their labors.

After aimlessly wandering about the bush, hoping that he could scrounge a meal from some trusting creature, he came upon the village of the Forest People. At first it seemed deserted, and he went from hut to hut and searched in vain.

At length he saw an elephant, seated beside a little fire, carefully stirring something in a large three-legged pot, and he sniffed the smell of cooking beans.

“Good morning, Uncle,” he said in his sweetest tones, his little nose quivering with delight. “Why do you sit alone on this bright and sunny morning?”

“Go away,” replied the elephant. “I am busy. It is my duty day today and I am cooking the food for those who hoe the lands.”

The hare carefully smoothed his glossy coat and stroked his whiskers, then sat down cross-legged opposite to the elephant. With his chin on his hands, he gazed for a long time at the Giant of the Forest without speaking. Then, with a sigh of admiration, he said, "Uncle, now I know that all I have heard of you is true. Never before would I believe that you have such beautiful long hair. Would you allow me to stroke it and feel its thickness and its strength?"

The elephant had very little of which to be proud in his looks, but he *could* boast of one thing. He had a long mane of coarse hair that fell over his shoulders, and all the other elephants in the forest were extremely jealous of this. Therefore, flattery from one who had as good an opinion of himself as the hare made him tremble with joy.

"Certainly, certainly," he answered. "You are welcome."

The hare stood on tiptoe and commenced gently to caress the elephant's hair, running his sharp little claws through its strands with the most soothing scratches on the thick skin.

"What lovely tresses!" he purred. "Let me plait them for you."

The elephant closed his eyes in enjoyment, and the hare commenced to sing a little song as he plaited the big creature's hair.

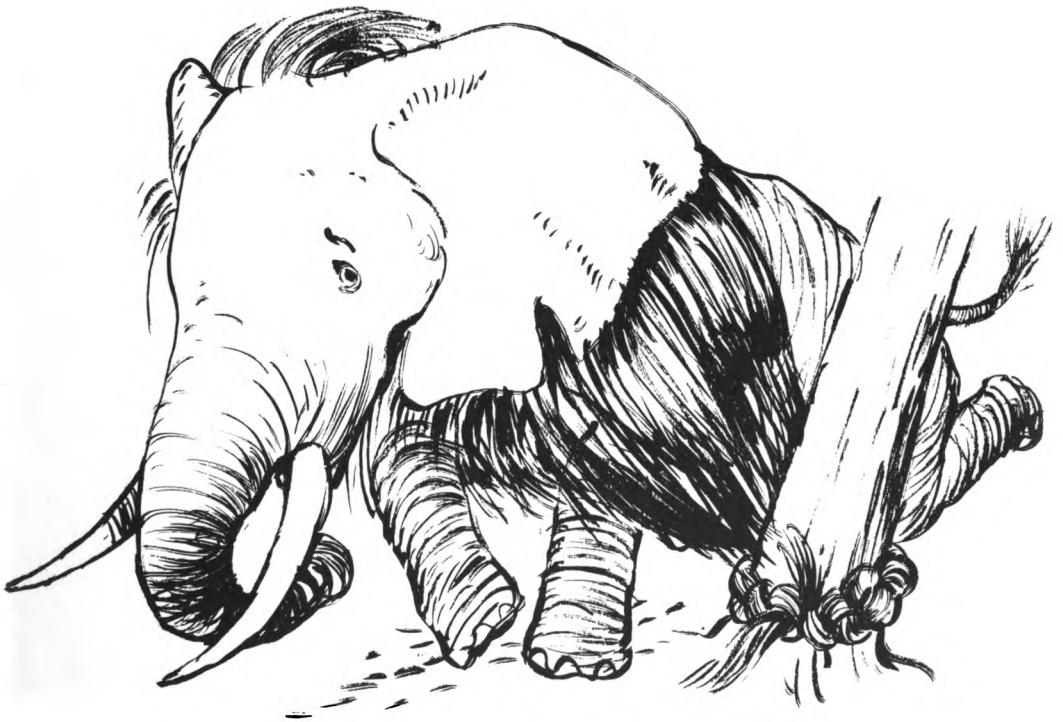
Slowly the elephant sank lower and lower to the ground as the attention to his hair made him more and more drowsy, until after a sigh of bliss, he settled down to a deep sleep.

With a wicked chuckle, the hare wound the long plait around a nearby tree, tying the elephant securely down. He thereupon turned to the pot of well-cooked beans, and scooped up every handful of the tasty meal. He then care-

fully put the lid on the pot and skipped off, very pleased with himself, and with the firm intention of returning on the following day for another meal of those delicious beans!

In time the animals returned from their morning's work in the fields, all hungry and ready for their breakfast.

As they came to the clearing, they saw the elephant wake up and stretch himself, and try to rise . . . but he could not because his anchor held him down. A roar of laughter greeted him as he sank helplessly to the ground again. The Giant of the Forest, tied by his own hair! It would be a long time before he was allowed to forget it.



The animals had worked hard in the fields and were very hungry. Taking their places around the pot they removed the lid. Not a bean was left! Then the elephant told them the whole story of the cunning of the hare, and even though they had laughed at the trick on the elephant, they made up their minds to get their revenge for the loss of their food.

So the next day the animals prepared for the hare. They told the tortoise to cook the food, as he was well known for his wisdom, and to deal with the hare when he came. Then as usual they all went out to hoe the lands.

Sure enough, the hare came swaggering down the path to the village with his thumbs beneath his armpits and his sensitive nose testing the wind for the smell of cooking beans. He walked slyly, for he knew that after his trick the day before, the animals would be on the lookout for him. There was no one there! The place was completely deserted (at least he *thought* it was deserted) and the pot of beans was gently bubbling away on its own.

“Oh! What a luscious smell,” chuckled the hare. “How very kind of my friends to prepare my breakfast for me!” Saying this, he sat down on the low bark stool that he found within reach of the pot. (At least he *thought* it was a stool, but it was the tortoise’s back!) He opened the pot and scooped out a handful of beans which he sniffed with delight.

“Cooked to a turn,” he murmured as he opened his mouth to put them in. But what was that? The beans never reached his mouth! Instead they fell on the floor as the tortoise gripped his two feet as if in a vise and held him astride his back saying, “We have got you this time, my friend.”

“Let me go, let me go, let me go, you piece of bark!” shrieked the hare, for he was still under the impression that

he had sat on a piece of tree trunk. "Can't you see the owners of the beans coming?"

"I see them coming," replied the tortoise, "and they will help me to kill you."

Whereupon the hare burst into tears. "Don't kill me, don't kill me!" he sobbed.

"What, not kill you, when you rob us of our food?" the angry animals cried as they came running up to the fire. They then set upon the hare with sticks and stones while the tortoise still held him firmly by the feet.

After the first few blows, the hare's body went limp and he rolled his eyes as if he was dying. Seeing this, the other animals said, "The boaster dies quickly. Leave him." So they left the hare for dead, and turned their attention to the pot of beans.

The hare pretended to be dead until he thought that they had forgotten all about him. Then, gradually and silently he crept to the edge of the forest. Once out of danger he shouted, "You can't catch me or kill me either. Did you *really* think that I was dead, Foolish Ones?" And his chuckles grew fainter and fainter as he was lost to sight in the forest.

A BRIDE FOR THE HARE

IN THE HEART of Africa there lived a dark-eyed queen, whose much-loved only son was the apple of her eye. Besides the son she had a daughter who was beautiful beyond words.

“Son,” said the queen one day, “we lack food. I beg you hunt some for the evening meal.”

The boy went off alone to do his mother’s bidding, and all the morning he searched in vain.

As the midday sun beat down more fiercely than usual upon him, he decided to rest a while, and, seeing a shady cave close at hand, he made for its inviting coolness.

An angry roar greeted him as he reached the entrance, and a lion sprang from the shadows and bore him to the ground.

All night long the mother waited for her son, and when in time news came of his death by the lion’s claws, she was heartbroken, and vowed to have her revenge on her son’s killer. She called her subjects to her, and told them that none

should wed her lovely daughter but he who had the courage to kill the lion.

As the news spread around, suitors who were skilled in the hunt came from far and near, with all the latest traps and wiles, to kill the killer. But larger and larger grew the pile of human bones at the entrance to the lion's cave, while the man-eater grew fatter and fatter.

As time went on, the numbers of those who came to win the lovely princess grew less and less, as it was realized that to try to kill the lion meant certain death. In fact some months passed without any would-be suitor coming.

One day the hare strolled into the yard of the royal kraal, and, bowing to the queen, said, "Your Majesty, I have come to seek the hand of your lovely daughter in marriage."



“Kill the wicked lion that killed my son, and she is yours,” answered the queen with a laugh at the foolishness of his wish.

“Very well,” answered the hare, looking around to make sure that the queen’s answer had been heard by all. Then away he went.

The following day he walked past the lion’s cave with a large bag slung over his shoulder, and seeing the lion basking in the sun, called out, “Good morning, your Lordship, you are wise to take it easy when the sun strikes down at midday. I, too, could do with a rest. How are your little ones today?”

The lion flicked his tail from side to side as he lay, but said nothing.

“A smoke would be pleasant in the coolness of your cave,” continued the hare. “Let me join you, Mighty One. I have come a long way, and am tired. I have a very special kind of tobacco in my pouch that I would have you sample.”

Now the lion enjoyed a quiet cool smoke, so he led the hare to his parlour where they sampled the tobacco, and chatted for a while.

Presently the hare said in a flattering tone, “No wonder they call you ‘The Mighty One!’ What wonderful muscles you have! I wonder what weight you could lift? Do you think that if I got into a bag, you could lift me above your head?”

“Easily, why you weigh nothing at all!” laughed the lion.

“You would be surprised to find how heavy I am,” boasted the hare, “and not only heavy. I am stronger than you think, in spite of my thin little arms. Let us see who can lift the other the highest! You can start on me.”

The lion was highly amused, but good-naturedly agreed.

“You try first,” said the hare, skipping out of the cave and climbing into the bag, “and when I say ‘ready’ see how high you can lift me.”

Now the hare had made a small hole at the bottom of the bag, just big enough to get his two hands through, and he had carefully placed the bag over the root of a tree that stuck up out of the ground. He lost no time in turning himself upside down in the bag, and there he held onto the root with all his might.

“Ready,” he called.

The lion tried and tried to lift the bag, but he could not even raise it clear of the ground, let alone get it above his head. After a long struggle, he wiped the perspiration from his brow, and sat down exhausted, saying, “My, but you *are* heavy!”

“Your turn now to get into the bag,” called out the hare from inside, and the lion let him out.

“It is not only *you* that I can lift,” he boasted as he climbed out, “but your wife and children too. Get in, all of you, and I will surprise you.”

The lion called his wife and children to get into the bag with him, to test the hare’s strength, but objected as the rope was tied securely around the mouth. However, the hare assured him that he needed the rope by which to lift the bag, and believing him, the lion called out, “Ready!”

“Ready, you Foolish One?” laughed the hare. “Ready to die!” and he thereupon rained down a shower of blows on the lion family with a big stick. This he continued to do until the lion, his wife and children were all dead, and there was no further movement from them.

He left them there, and went to the royal kraal to claim his reward, but no one believed him.

“You say that *you* have killed not only the wicked lion, but his wife and children too? That is *impossible!*” said the villagers. But in the end he prevailed upon them to go back with him to the cave where they found the bag with the lion, his wife and children beaten to death.

There was great rejoicing as they made a huge bonfire over the bag. Then they danced around it as the flames devoured the remains of the lion family, until the hare reminded them of his reward. Thereupon they returned to the village where, with all due ceremony, the lovely princess was handed to the hare as his bride.

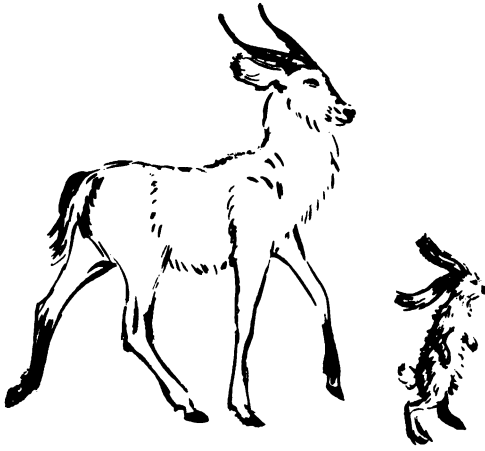


THE HARE AND THE REEDBUCK

COMELY WIVES were scarce where the hare and the reedbuck lived, and one day after a long discussion on the lack of merits of their own maidens, they decided to go on a trip to a far-distant country, where each would search for the type of wife he fancied.

As you may (or may not) know, in these lands the round and buxom wife commands the greater marriage price, and as they walked along, the reedbuck boasted that with his superior strength, he would naturally be looked upon as the wealthier of the two, and would therefore have the better choice.

“Nephew,” he said, “I will find a nice *fat* girl; one with brawny arms who will hoe my lands for me with strength. But who will look at *you*? No self-respecting girl will agree to marry a skinny thing like you! Your fate will be a skinny wife who will but scratch the earth to sow your crops. Oh, ho, ho!” and he laughed most unpleasantly at the discomfort of the hare.



The hare refused to listen any further, assuring the reedbuck that he would continue to search until he *did* find a fat bride. After three days' travelling they arrived at a village where there were many beautiful girls, and there they decided to end their search, for nowhere had they seen such perfection.

The girls themselves were beyond reproach; their movements were full of grace and beauty, and their huts were clean and tidy, while the ripening grain from their sowings burst their husks with plenty. The hare and the reedbuck rested and looked around.

Soon the reedbuck said, "When you go swimming you never watch the water." This is a native proverb meaning that amidst such abundance one does not look at individuals. He called an old man to him, and giving him a love token, begged him to approach the parents of one of the maidens with a view to marriage, as was the custom in those parts.



Some time passed, and as the old man had not returned, the hare laughed at the redbuck, saying, “Your advances have been refused by the parents of the girl — *not* because you lack strength, but because you eat only green beans from their gardens!” And he held his hand insultingly to his mouth to smother his laughter.

The redbuck was annoyed and said, “Be quiet, will you? Have you no respect for your uncle?” At that moment the old man returned with the news that the parents of the girl whom he had approached had accepted the redbuck’s request for their daughter’s hand.

“Ah!” said the redbuck to the hare. “Your tongue ran ahead of you; you spoke too soon of the way the wind would blow.” To his great joy he found that the old man had chosen him a strong and buxom wife. He made no attempt to conceal his laughter at the hare, and suggested that he should now try *his* luck.

“Yes,” replied the hare, “it is as you said, you are fortunate indeed. With such a wife you will be envied by all, and people will bow down to you when you appear in public with her at our village.”

Soon the wedding preparations commenced and a cow was killed to provide the marriage feast.

“I too will find a wife,” said the hare, “maybe the niece of your future mother-in-law. Then we could hold our wedding feasts together.”

“No,” answered the reedruck in shocked tones, “you cannot do such a thing, for you are my nephew, and tribal law will not permit a marriage within the clan.”

But the hare said, “*Anything* is worth trying. Do you not know the proverb that says ‘Wife, cook me an axe, for everything needs trying once?’” With that *he* took a love token to the same old man, asking him to go to the parents of a particularly plump girl whom he had been watching, and to tell them that he had seen their daughter, who was in love with him and wanted to marry him (which of course was a lie).

“What!” said the girl when her parents approached her. “Marry *that* skinny little runt? Why, I have never even spoken to him!” The same thing happened each time the hare tried to find a bride; the girls laughed at him and turned him down, because he was so small and skinny, while his envy of the reedruck’s good fortune grew and grew.

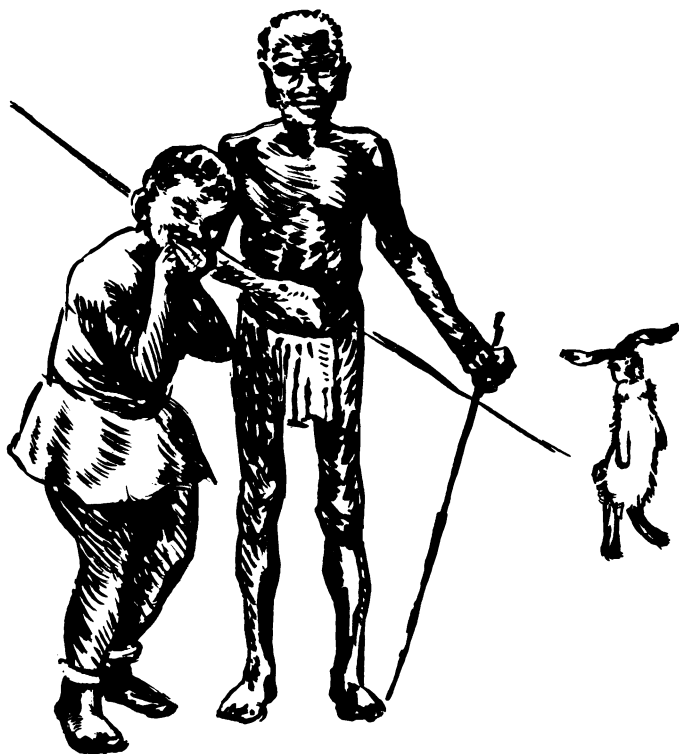
As the time for the marriage drew nearer, he made plans for his “uncle’s” downfall, until he finally hit upon what he thought was a splendid idea. Late one night he crept stealthily to the goat pen belonging to the reedruck’s prospective father-in-law, and killed a number of his goats. From one of these he drained the blood into a gourd, and after

removing the skin, he went to the hut occupied by the reed-buck.

There he found his "uncle" in a very deep sleep, and with great care he smeared him well with goat blood, and covered him with the skin.

By this time the remaining goats, smelling the blood of their dead companions, commenced to bleat, and all the people of the village flocked from their huts to find out what had happened. All, that is, except the reedbuck, who was such a heavy sleeper that no amount of noise ever woke him.

The hare quickly mingled with the crowd, and when the slaughter in the goat pen was discovered, he exclaimed, "Oh! This is *dreadful*. I must inform my uncle, the reedbuck, at once of what has happened, so that he may help to catch the culprit." He asked the prospective father-in-law to accompany him, as the night was very dark, and he was, he said, afraid to go alone.



They took a torch of blazing wood and went to the reed buck's hut and, pushing the door aside, saw him asleep in a pool of blood, with the skin of a freshly killed goat covering him.

"Oh," cried the hare once more, "*this* is even more dreadful," as an angry crowd gathered at the door and demanded the death of the culprit. Time and again the poor reed buck tried to protest his innocence, but the proof was there for all to see, and he could not explain away the blood and the skin.

He was beaten and driven from the village in disgrace, while all praised the clever hare for finding the slayer of the goats so quickly.

The prospective father-in-law was so grateful that he gave his buxom daughter to the hare as a reward. Thereupon, without delay, and with many chuckles at his own cunning, the hare married the reed buck's prospective bride.



THE LION, THE HARE, AND THE ELAND

THERE IS A PROVERB among the people of Central Africa which, when translated, means, "The words of an inferior are automatically ignored," and this story tells of how the hare brought about the downfall of a worthy but slow-thinking citizen of the forest, in this manner.

In one of the animal kingdoms not far from the great wild Congo, the lion ruled as chief of all the beasts. He ruled his people wisely and, with the help of his two sons, kept law and order in the forest, being looked up to and respected by all his subjects.

Not far away lived the hare, who, as was well known by all, had no love of work of any kind. Finding himself without clothing one day, and being, as ever, full of impertinence, he walked boldly into the lion's home, having first made sure from passers-by that the chief was away at work.

"Good morning, cousins," he said, addressing the lion's sons. "Where is my uncle?"

“He is away in the gardens, seeing to his crops,” replied the sons.

“Well, when he returns, say that his nephew came to see him. Tell him that I am in need of clothing, and I want him to make me some cloth to wear. Let him understand that if he fails to obey my orders, he will die!” he added in a threatening tone as he turned and walked back to the forest.

Now the two sons, being young, were much impressed at the apparent importance of their “cousin,” and gave his message to their father when he returned from the fields.

“Nephew?” roared the lion. “I have no nephew, and who is *he* to give me orders? So he threatened me with death, did he? We will discuss that when I meet him.”

However, he was nothing if not cautious, so he stripped a good piece of bark from a tree, and after carefully separating the soft inner part from the rough outside bark, he dried it in the sun for several days. When this was done he soaked it in some muddy water for a day to make it soft and pliable.

Now commenced the part that really needed skill. He fetched a flat board from his hut, and laying the wet bark upon it, he pounded it gently with his little wooden mallet, while his two sons dampened it from time to time as he worked. He was proud of the cloth that he made. All the animals knew it even at a distance by the fineness of its texture. At last it was finished, and he hung it on a tree to dry.

On the following morning he went as usual to his lands.

The hare had been watching the clothmaking from a nearby thicket, and when the lion was out of sight and hearing, he boldly walked up to the lion’s two sons and asked again, “Where is my uncle?”

To this they once more replied, "He is away, attending to his gardens."

"Is this the cloth I told him to make for me?" he continued, swaggering up to the tree on which the cloth hung, and feeling it appreciatively between finger and thumb.

The sons replied, "Yes, our father said, 'If my nephew comes, tell him to wait, as I want to see him to discuss this matter with him.'"

The hare had no intention of meeting his "uncle," so he said, "No, tell him that his nephew came, took the cloth, and left."

On his return the lion, smarting at the hare's further impertinence, vowed to kill him as soon as he could lay hands upon him.

He therefore sent an order to all his subjects to come to a meeting. From far and near they came, in obedience to his command, all attired in their best, and well groomed to do honour to their chief.

The hare looked very smart in his new cloth, but felt rather uncomfortable at his treatment of the lion, so when he passed the eland, also on his way to the meeting, and saw that he was naked, he called out to him.

"Good morning, friend," he said, "I feel very sorry that such a respected citizen as you should have to go naked to greet our chief. Let me give you my cloth to wear. I am so small that His Majesty will not notice my nakedness."

"That is indeed kind of you, Hare," replied the eland as he took the cloth and draped it around himself. Then he said, "It is true that clothes add greatly to one's importance in the eyes of one's superiors. I am indeed grateful to you, my friend." Whereupon they continued on their way to the meeting.

On their arrival, they bowed low to the lion, saying, "Greetings, Your Majesty, you are all-powerful here. We have come at your bidding."

As the lion's eyes fell upon the cloth that he had so lately made, draped over the eland's shoulders, there was a stony silence. Then he turned to the other animals and said, "That is my cloth, which has caused me to call you here today."

The eland's hearing, however, was not very good, and seeing the lion pointing at him, he bowed again politely and said, "Good morning, oh Chief."

A rumbling noise came from deep down inside the lion as he stood up and said, "You must forgive me, all of you, for I have called you all here for something that does not concern you. The case is this. I was away from home, and one day some animal came to my sons and said, 'I am your father's nephew, and he must make me a cloth to wear.' Now I have not got a nephew, and all that day I did not sleep for thinking of this happening. Who was this impostor? Now I see the eland wearing this very cloth in my presence! Look at him. I, your chief, made that cloth!"

A great murmur of anger arose as the animals called out, "Let us kill him." So they caught the eland, and took a knife to kill him.

The poor eland cried out, "Please, please, this is not my cloth. The hare has brought this trouble upon me. He gave me his cloth to cover up my nakedness."

But the hare did not give him time to say more. He caught the eland by the neck and spat in his eyes and on his face, saying, "A slave dies with nothing to say."

So they killed the eland, and, alas, they all went back to their homes, satisfied that justice had been done.



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THE ELEPHANT, THE HARE AND THE LEOPARD

(HOW THE LEOPARD GOT HIS SPOTS)

IN THE FARAWAY JUNGLES of Central Africa there is a large area of forest lands where the elephant ruled as king, and all the animals obeyed him. He ruled his people justly, giving fitting punishment to those who broke his laws. Among these laws there was one which he enforced with great severity; he would have no flesh-eaters in his kingdom.

“Eat as I do,” he would say to his subjects, “ripe fruits from the trees, grass from the plainlands, luscious leaves from the forest, and honeycomb that gives sweetness to the tongue. Such food is good for all, and makes no enemies.”

“Yes, yes! He speaks the truth,” agreed all his subjects, thinking of the dangers that lurked in the neighbouring forests and lands that were ruled by those who were less wise than their lord the elephant. His people grew to be so care-free and careless of danger that prowlers from neighbouring territories smacked their lips, and looked hungrily at the tempting meals across the border.

Some slipped over, from time to time, to ease their hunger. The tawny leopard was one among the flesh-eaters from nearby who brooded on the trustfulness of the elephant's subjects. One day, unable to catch a meal for himself in his own sovereign's kingdom, he crept stealthily into the elephant's domain. Lying concealed along an overhanging branch above a pathway, he waited, prepared to pounce upon whatever hapless creature passed beneath him.

It so happened that the elephant king had at that time sent his messenger, Kalulu the hare, on an errand, and as Kalulu gaily tripped along the path beneath the bough, the leopard sprang on him.

"Oh, oh, oh!" screamed Kalulu. "My lord, a trespasser has caught me! Come to my help or I shall be killed!" The elephant happened to be gathering honey near at hand, and recognising his messenger's cry for help, set up such a loud trumpeting that the leopard turned his head to see what was the cause of such a deafening noise.

In that second of surprise, Kalulu escaped from the big cat's sharp claws, and the elephant, appearing on the scene, seized the culprit in his trunk and held him high above his head, saying angrily, "Why are you trying to kill my messenger? Do you not know that the rules of my kingdom forbid *anyone* within my borders to eat flesh?"

With these words he threw the leopard into a pool of water nearby, hoping to drown him as a punishment for his disobedience. But the leopard was wise in the ways of swimming and crawled out on the other side, saying in a silken voice, "You are mistaken, my lord. Never would I even *consider* eating flesh. Surely you must know that my food consists only of 'ripe fruits from the trees, grass from the plainlands, luscious leaves from the forest, and honeycomb

that gives sweetness to the tongue.' Could you not see that I was preparing to have a game with your messenger?"

"Oh," replied the elephant, "if that is the case, here is some honey for you. Let me see you eat it, that I may test your honesty." And he handed the leopard a large piece of honeycomb that he had just gathered.

The leopard took the honeycomb, and stuffing it hastily into his mouth, commenced to eat it. He immediately had trouble, however, for the elephant (knowing that he was telling a lie) had given him by way of punishment a comb that was full of very angry bees. These set upon the leopard, stinging him with their sharp tails all over his long yellow body.

The leopard jumped into the air screaming with pain as the stings penetrated his hairy skin. He then rolled on the ground, hoping to crush and thus rid himself of the fiery little creatures, but the more he rolled, the deeper he rubbed the poisonous stings into his tender flesh, until on every spot where a bee had settled, a burning sore appeared. Thus it came about that until this very day these spots have remained upon his children and his children's children.

The hare and the elephant went off together, well pleased with themselves, and the hare's laughter could be heard becoming fainter and fainter as he followed his lord back to his home, while the leopard, with a terrible anger in his heart, vowed that he would hunt and destroy Kalulu and his kind forever more.



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THE ANTELOPES' CONVENTION

A LONG TIME AGO Kalulu the hare had much shorter legs than he has today, and this being so, his speed was naturally not so great as that of his present descendants, and it came about in this manner.

The horned animals of the wilds (the antelopes that abound in the great open spaces of the central parts of Africa) kept very much to themselves, banding together against the dangers and enemies that encircled them.

They, therefore, from time to time held secret meetings to discuss such things as concerned the antelope tribe. No other creatures of the wilds were admitted to these gatherings, and this was a source of great annoyance to Kalulu, who was by nature full of curiosity.

The more he thought of what he might be missing, the more he longed to attend these forbidden gatherings, until one day he made up his mind that in the disguise of an antelope, he would pass himself off as one of them. He therefore

called on an antelope friend from whom he begged the loan of a pair of horns that had belonged to a cousin who had died.

“What do you want to do with them?” asked the antelope suspiciously.

“Well,” replied the hare, “I am having great trouble at home from the nightly prowlings of Nkalomo the lion, and I fear for the safety of my family. Now, if I can glue these sharp horns onto my head, and make him think that I am one of you, he will never *dare* to rob me of my children.”

Thinking that no harm could possibly come from such a request, and being flattered that so formidable an enemy should be considered to respect their horns, the friend readily agreed. Kalulu then went off happily, dragging the large pair of horns behind him.

His next move was to the forest, where he collected some strong gum from a wild rubber tree, after which he made for home. There, after much cutting, scraping and polishing, he filled the hollows of the horns with the sticky latex and tucking his two long ears into them, fitted them carefully onto his head.

He then went to look at himself in a nearby pool, and chuckled as he patted the hair into shape around the parts where the horns met his skin, though he felt a trifle top-heavy as he bent over the water.

He trembled with excitement as he made his way to the antelope’s meeting place, and his courage almost failed him as he asked for admittance. He was fortunate, however, for there was such a great deal of noise and laughter among those inside that nobody noticed as he sat down among them.

“Ah, just as I thought,” he murmured to himself. Mead, and plenty of it, was being passed around, so with a sigh of

contentment he buried his twitching little nose deep into the pot that was handed to him. He must be careful of that nose of his, he thought, for, try as he might, he could not control its twitching. His hairy little feet, too, were rather a give-away, so he tried to keep them out of sight.



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However, as the meeting progressed, and the mead got more and more into their heads, the antelopes, and he too, became more and more sleepy, until in the end he abandoned all pretence of care, and fell into a heavy sleep on the floor, just where he had happened to be sitting.

Unfortunately for Kalulu, the gum with which he had stuck the horns onto his head was not strong enough for such rough treatment, besides which the heat in the hut soon melted it. By degrees, while he and the antelopes slept, and the time passed, the horns became loose, and finally fell off altogether.

There was great consternation in the meeting room when the grey dawn revealed Kalulu still fast asleep, with the horns lying by his side. He came back to consciousness to hear the cry of "Spy!" ringing in his ears, followed by shouts of "*Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!*" But the hare had lived by his wits for too long to be caught easily, and he was out of the hut before the slow-witted antelopes were able to lay hands on him. By the time they had collected themselves all they could see was his little white tail bobbing away in the distance.

Straightway there commenced such a chase as has never been equalled in animal history. Harder and harder the antelopes pressed him, and Kalulu strained every muscle in his short legs; the more he strained them, the longer they grew. And the longer they grew, the greater strides he made, until he finally outdistanced his pursuers, to become the fast, long-legged creature that he is today.



THE LION AND THE ROBIN

THE NATIVES OF CENTRAL AFRICA will tell you that the lion is a very fastidious animal, who will seldom eat more than one big meal from his kill. Sometimes, in periods of scarcity or if he is very hungry, he will return for a second meal, but he will never touch the meat once it has lost its freshness.

It happened that one day a lion killed a fine fat buffalo. Now this was far too much for even a very big hungry lion to finish, and there was a great deal left over. So, after he had licked his paws and cleaned his whiskers, he sauntered off for a long sleep in the forest nearby, leaving the rest of the meal behind.

He had hardly moved out of sight, when there flitted to the tree above his kill a little robin, the bird with the neat red waistcoat. Patiently the robin waited for two days, hopping from branch to branch until the meat began to decay. He thereupon descended to the carcass, and for a week or more ate his fill of the juicy worms that now covered it. In time, however, the supply ran out, and the robin left.

Before many days had passed he heard the roar of the King of Beasts once again, and in his roar the lion said, "This is *my* country; This is *my* country!" It was the challenge he always gave when he made a kill, meaning that he was the strongest of them all, and king of the wilds.

The robin followed the sound of the voice, and in time found his lordship enjoying his newly killed prey. The lion caught sight of the little red waistcoat bobbing about above him and said, "Tell me, robin, why is it that you follow me wherever I go?"

"I follow you," answered the robin, "because I like to eat the meat that you leave. Surely you do not grudge me that for which you have no further use?"

"Certainly not, you are welcome to my leavings," answered the lion good-naturedly, "but I have seen you hanging about my kills for days after I have left them. Why do you eat rotten meat?"

"It's true I do, Mighty One," replied the little bird. "I eat such food because it is all that I can get. I am too small to kill for myself."

"Yes, I understand," said the lion kindly. "It is a great misfortune for you to be so little, but I will help you if you wish."

"Oh, King of all Beasts! Great and Noble One, live forever! Please do so!" twittered the little bird excitedly.

"I can help you to become a big fierce animal, and then you will be able to keep yourself in all the fresh meat you wish," the lion continued. "But if I do this for you, will you promise to obey my commands?"

"Anything! Anything you say, my lord," replied the robin, dancing up and down in excited anticipation.

"Very well," said the lion, "follow me." And he led his friend to the home of a witch doctor, from whom he



bought a magic potion. This he handed to the little bird to drink.

No sooner had the robin swallowed the witch doctor's medicine than he changed his shape into that of a beautiful tawny spotted leopard, and off he went, well pleased with himself, to hunt all kinds of small buck and animals.

A week later he met his friend the lion, who asked him how he was doing for himself. "Well," replied the leopard, "of course things are much better than they used to be but I wish I could catch *big* animals, as *you* do."

"Very well," said the lion, "this also I can arrange for you, but only on a very strict condition."

"Whatever you say, I will abide by!" agreed the leopard.

So the lion bought another potion from the witch doctor, and gave it to the leopard, saying as he did so, "Now,



this is my condition. When you have made your kill, you are never to roar as I do, for all this is *my* country and belongs to me, and I am therefore *entitled* to say 'This is *my* country! This is *my* country!' When you make your kill you are to say, 'This is *somebody else's* country! This is *somebody else's* country!' Should you disobey my order, something terrible will happen to you."

"I will remember," replied the leopard as he drank the potion. No sooner had he swallowed the last drop than he was changed into a handsome lion, though not quite as big as his benefactor, and away he went to hunt big game.

His first kill was a sleek and fat kudu, and he was so elated that he pulled the carcass to an ant heap, and mounting to the top of it he roared, "This is *somebody else's* country! This is *somebody else's* country!" and all the creatures trembled at the sound of the new voice in their midst.

The big lion heard the challenge and went to see how his pupil was progressing. "It is good that you have come," said the smaller lion, "for I called you to eat with me. See how well I have done with my first big kill!" And the two of them settled down together to enjoy their feast.

All went well for some time, and the smaller lion made many large kills. In time, however, he became so puffed up with pride at his prowess as a hunter that he said to himself, "Why should I belittle myself by saying that this is someone else's country? I am equal to anybody!"

On the following day he killed a zebra and, dragging its carcass to the largest ant heap he could find, he climbed to the top and roared defiantly, "This is *my* country! This is *my* country!" and immediately afterwards commenced his meal.

Before he had finished eating, the big lion, having heard his roar, arrived on the scene. "Who was that who roared 'This is *my* country?'" he asked.

"It was I," replied the smaller lion, commencing to feel a trifle uncomfortable.

"Oh, and what made you say that?" asked the larger lion, "when I told you to say 'It is *somebody else's* country?'"

"I made a mistake," answered the smaller lion, feeling by now anything but sure of himself.

"Oh, did you?" interrupted the larger lion. "Now, let me see. What were you before I turned you into a lion?"

"I was a leopard," answered the other — and as he uttered the words he changed back into a leopard. He was greatly surprised, because he had not felt the change taking place.

"And what were you before that?" asked the king of the forest.

“I was a robin,” and as he uttered the words he changed back into the tiny little robin that he was to begin with, and there in the grass where he had been sitting he began singing, “Tii, tii, tiii!”

So you see, friends, if you are not satisfied with the good things that come to you in life, they will be taken away from you!

KALULU, THE CLEVER ONE

THE ELEPHANT KING WAS OLD beyond the memory of all his subjects, and he felt that his life was fast drawing to a close. However, he was willing to die, for he had ruled his people of the forest well and wisely for many decades, and he was very tired. So he crept away into the solitude of his beloved forest, and there amidst the great trees and creepers, he breathed his last.

Now, the hare and his wife were very poor; true, they worked for a rich man, but he was mean and niggardly, giving them only a pittance in return for their services. Like all his kind, the hare loved the luxuries of the world, but on the meagre wage he earned could have none of them.

He therefore approached his wife saying, "Wife, we must move from here, and search for new pastures where we can get really rich, and live as those around us live, in luxury and comfort. Come, we will hunt for treasure!"

They tied their few possessions in two little bundles, and with these slung over their shoulders, set out across the forest for the great plains beyond. They had travelled for some distance when they came across the dead body of their elephant king. "Ah!" chuckled the hare. "Surely here is our chance for riches! Wife, go and call our lord's many subjects. Tell them that their king is gravely ill and, feeling that his end is drawing near, he wishes to speak to them. Tell them that he asks each to bring as many jimbu shells (which was their form of money in those days) as he can spare, wrapped up in a banana leaf, each with his name on it.

"I, wife, will speak to them from the inside of our dead king's mouth."

He chuckled once more as he climbed into his place of concealment, while Mrs. Hare went to do her husband's bidding.

Before long the dead king's subjects commenced to arrive, and each looked with reverence at their beloved ruler on (as they thought) his deathbed.

"My people," squeaked the voice from inside the elephant's mouth, when they had all gathered together, "I am very ill, and the time has come for me to leave you. The weakness of my voice will prove to you that all my strength has gone. There is one request, though, that I wish to make before I die. I want you to speed my soul to its ancestors with dancing and a funeral feast befitting one who has ruled as long as I. Show your love for me, my dear people, in the tokens that you give. My chief councillor, the hare, will now collect these offerings. Tomorrow the hare will prepare the feast which I expect you all to attend. Go, now, all of you, and let me die alone."



Mrs. Hare stood beside the elephant's head, and with her ears dropped in sorrow, held out a large bag. In this the animals placed their packages of jimbu shells as they filed past paying their last respects to what they thought was their dying king.

When the last animal had passed out of sight, that rascally hare climbed out of his hiding place in the dead elephant's mouth, and smoothing down his ruffled coat rushed over to his wife. "How much have you got?" he asked, pointing to the bag full of wealth.

“Fifty thousand jimbus!” answered his wife gleefully. “Now we are rich indeed!”

“We must make haste and leave for another kingdom,” said her husband, trying to hide his excitement and joy. “We will buy ourselves a farm in an adjoining country where we will live a life of ease and plenty. We must hurry, though, for there will be trouble if our dead king’s subjects catch us!”

They lost no time in putting many miles between themselves and the scene of their deceit, and before long they had settled down in a faraway country, on their own little farm, amidst the many comforts that they bought with their ill-gotten gains.

Needless to say, there was weeping and great anger when the animals turned up on the following day, all dressed in their best clothes, and looking forward to the funeral feast, only to find that their lord the elephant had been dead for *many* days, and that the Clever One had fooled them again!

THE MAGIC ANTHILL

ONCE THERE WAS A MAIDEN more beautiful than all the others in the land. Her hand was sought in marriage by men both near and far, but one by one she turned from them, saying scornfully to her father, "What, do you think that I could be satisfied with such as *that*?"

One day it happened that as she and her young brother sat talking on the riverbank where she had gone to draw water, a man of outstanding handsomeness approached them.

"My gentle one," he said, addressing the girl, "will you guide me to your father's home? I am ill, and would beg shelter from him for a while."

"What limbs!" she said to herself. "What flashing eyes! What strength and beauty! Surely this man is the one for me!" But to him she said in an offhand manner, "Let my brother guide you to my father's kraal, for I await another at the water hole." This was not the truth, but she decided that a tinge of jealousy might be good for her new acquaintance.

Her brother was only too eager to follow her wishes, for he too was greatly taken with the young man's looks. On arrival at the kraal the stranger was kindly received, and invited to rest until he was restored to health.

As the days went by, he made no sign of continuing on his way, and the daughter set herself out to capture this handsome young man. Some time later they were married, whereupon the bridegroom took up his abode at her father's kraal. There, all marvelled at his success as a hunter. Whenever he went out in search of meat, he brought home a buck, whereas the other village men often returned empty-handed.

Now this intrigued the little brother, and his respect for his new relative continued to grow, until he decided to follow at a distance to see how this clever brother-in-law gained his success. Surely, he thought, could I learn such skill, my fame would spread throughout the land! His heart was filled with joy at such a possibility.

Therefore on the following day he carefully stole after his brother-in-law. In time he saw him reach and climb a large anthill, then heard him say in a loud voice, "Mambilimba, Mambilimba, let us go and kill beasts. My father-in-law wants meat!"

As the words left his lips, the shape of the handsome stranger changed to that of an enormous lion. With the lion crouched upon it, the magic anthill moved silently into a herd of buck that was grazing close at hand. With a savage roar and a spring, the lion bore the nearest buck to the ground, and there he killed it.

Throughout all this happening the little brother watched in astonishment and fear. Then, creeping away close to the ground until he was out of sight, he ran quickly back to his father's kraal.



On his arrival he went at once to his sister and said, "Your husband is a 'Lion-man.' I saw him change his shape and spring upon a buck, as I followed him on the hunt."

This made his sister angry and she beat him, saying, "You lie. He is a human being, just as you are." Therefore, in fear of another beating he was silent.

In time the husband told his father-in-law that he wished to take his wife to his own home, and having gained his consent, the two set out upon their journey. The little brother begged to be allowed to go with them, but the sister refused, saying, "I do not want you near me, for you do not speak the truth." So they left him behind.

However, he followed after them, and not until they had reached the husband's home did they discover him. The sister then relented and let him stay.

All went well for many days, and regularly the husband brought home from the hunt all the meat that they could eat.

The time came, though, when the boy awoke in fear one midnight to see a great tawny lion standing over his sister, and heard it say, "Now you are nice and fat with all the meat I have killed for you. You refused to marry one of your own people, but married me, not knowing who I was. The time has come for me to eat you!" He bared his great white fangs as he made ready to seize her by the throat.

The brother jumped up, and his action broke the spell which held the lion's form, and the husband, once more in his human shape, said, "Why do you not sleep, brother?"

"It is nothing," said the boy. "There is a stone that spoils the comfort of my bed." So, his plan thwarted, the husband lay down to sleep, thinking the boy had not seen him in his lion's form.

This happened for several nights, but the boy was on the watch, and each time foiled the lion-man as he was about to kill his sister, until finally he told her what he had seen. Once more she accused her brother of telling lies, and beat him as before, so he set about thinking of a plan that would save them both.

After she had gone to sleep that night, he carefully tied a long piece of string to one of his sister's fingers, and holding the other end he settled down to watch.

Presently he saw the lion-man creep into the hut, and bending over his wife, again take on the form of a fearsome lion, and he heard him say, "This time I shall *certainly* eat you."

As the brother pulled the string, the girl awoke, and seeing the lion crouching over her called out, "Brother, brother, save me!"

Immediately the spell was broken and her husband, once more back in his human form said, "What is it that disturbs you, my pretty one? It is but a dream. You must sleep again." So she was spared.

"Now," said the boy to his sister on the following morning, when the husband had gone on his usual hunt, "do I speak the truth?"

"Most surely you speak it," answered the sister sorrowfully, "and by my disbelief I must bring about the death of both of us, for how can we escape from him, so far away from our home?"

"Quickly," said the boy, "follow me," and he led her to an anthill nearby. Climbing onto it he pulled her after him, calling out, "Mambilimba, Mambilimba, take us to our home." In obedience to the magic words the anthill rose up into the air, and bore them homewards.

The lion-man returned from his hunt in time to see the anthill carry his prey over the treetops towards their home, and his mighty roar of rage shook the forest, for, with his magic anthill gone, he realized that he must in future keep his lion form.

After that he roamed through and through the forest, afraid to seek his human wife at her father's home, for all would know his lion form, and would surely kill him. He therefore made a vow — forever more he would seek and kill all human beings that came his way.



THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN BIRDS

ONCE UPON A TIME A CHIEF of importance ruled over a wild and lonely country far from the beaten track. There were times of great hardship for his people, for few traders came his way, and cloth to cover their nakedness was scarce. It happened on one occasion that such bad times fell on them with more severity than usual. No cloth had been available for many months, and their unclothed state was a great sorrow to them.

One day a large flock of Golden Birds that shone like the rising sun flew over the royal kraal, and as they passed they shed a cloud of feathers which united into cloth before they floated to the ground — enough to clothe all the great chief's subjects.

There was much rejoicing throughout his kingdom. Such a windfall had never come to them before and they marvelled at the kindness of the Golden Birds. In time, however, the cloth wore out, and once again they were confronted with their former state of nakedness.

The chief then decided to send his eleven sons to find the Golden Birds and he therefore called them to him, saying, "Sons, you must search far and wide to find the Golden Birds, and bring them back to me that we may keep them here forever and never want for cloth. Do not come back to me without them for, even though you are my sons, I will kill you if you do."

The eleven sons thereupon made their preparations to depart while their mothers cooked food for their journey. Soon they all set off together on their search.

Day after day they sought the Golden Birds through the forests, but nowhere could they find or even hear of them. Finally they reached a village where, tired and footsore, the eldest said, "Brothers, let us stay here forever. We cannot return to our country, for our father will kill us all."

He therefore looked for a wife, found one, and settled down to married life. The ten remaining brothers, however, continued on their way, searching again until they came to another village. There the eldest brother of the ten who were left said what the elder one had said before, and all that had happened in the first village took place again. He married and the nine that remained went on without him.

The same thing happened again and again until at last there was only one left, the youngest brother. He was now a man, as he had been wandering for many years, and his wanderings had taken him far from home. By this time he had reached a foreign land where all was strange to him.

He continued on his way and one day, while passing through a forest, he met Akakantote, the praying mantis, who said to him, "What brings you, a stranger, to this land?" Whereupon the youngest brother told him the story of his search for the Golden Birds. The mantis listened and said at



the end, "You have grown to maturity in your search, and still you endeavour to carry out your father's wish. I will help you."

He took a small gourd, which he filled with flies and beads. He then put a lid on the gourd and gave it to the young man, saying as he did so, "This will lead you to your journey's end."

Now, as he took it in his hand, the flies and beads turned into the loathsome disease of scabies, which spread all over his body; but one fly escaped from the gourd, and darted ahead of him. So, holding the gourd, he followed the little insect as on and on it flew.

In time it took him to a city where the people had houses such as he had never seen before, and paler skins than he had ever seen. There they caught and beat him, as the sight of a black man was strange to them, and the sores that covered him turned everybody against him.

"What do you want?" they asked him.

"I look for the Golden Birds," he said. Just then there was a burst of song from the very birds themselves, and



their golden brightness lit the sky as they passed above him and alighted on the roof of a palace nearby. He cried aloud for joy, for he thought that he had reached his journey's end.

Then the people said, "Who are *you*, dirty and full of disease, to come and ask us for our Golden Birds? On one condition only will we let them go. Many days' journey from here you will find another, larger city, and there you will find a Magic Drum. Bring us the Drum, and you may have our Golden Birds."

On he went again, still following the fly, and after many days he reached the city of the Drum. Here houses were stranger even than the last, and the people even paler-skinned, and they beat him even more severely than before, asking him what was his business there?

When they heard that he wanted their Magic Drum, they laughed loudly at his daring and said, "Bring us the Golden Queen from the city that rules over all the land. *Then* and then only, may you have our Magic Drum."

Once again he set forth on his travels with the fly still leading the way, and after many days he reached the biggest

city of all. Here he was caught and beaten more cruelly than ever before, after which they dragged him to their ruler.

When this great man heard his tale from the time he set out on his quest, and the trials that had beset him on the way, he marvelled at his courage and at his strength of purpose — so much so that he decided to give him their precious Golden Queen who shone like the sun, as a reward for his bravery. However, there was great sorrow and weeping among the people, as he left the city with their Queen.

Now that his search was ended, the little fly that had led him returned into the gourd he carried, and the disease it had brought him disappeared.

With the Golden Queen he travelled back to the city of the Magic Drum, and gave her to its people. They were stricken with remorse at the way they had ill-used him, and when they had heard the story of his perseverance and courage, and of the trouble that had dogged his footsteps, they decided not to take the Golden Queen who shone like the sun, but to give him the Magic Drum. So he left their city, taking with him the wonderful Drum, *and* the Golden Queen, and continued his journey to the city of the Golden Birds. There he gave the Drum to the people of that city, in exchange for the Golden Birds.

As before, the people who had beaten and ill-used him were full of remorse for their cruelty, and gave him the Golden Birds, saying, “Go with our blessings, *and* our birds, but we will not take the Magic Drum.”

Thus it was that he now possessed the Golden Queen that shone like the sun, the Magic Drum, and the Golden Birds. So he married the beautiful Queen, and the Golden Birds sang, and the Magic Drum played, as they set out towards his father’s home.

On the way home through the forest he met Akakantote. After telling of his journey, he gave him back the little gourd with the flies and the beads which had now returned, and thanked him for his kindness.

“It is nothing,” said the mantis. “May you travel safely.”

He continued along the way that he had come until he reached the village of the second youngest of the eleven brothers. He found that things were far from well with this brother. He found him dirty, sick, and in great poverty. The wife he had married had grown tired of him and no longer cooked his food. Thereupon, the youngest brother comforted him, clothed and fed him, and bade him return to his father with him. They then continued on their way.

As he retraced his steps, he found first one brother and then the next, living in great distress. All were in poverty and ill-health. One by one he cared for them, and took them on with him, leaving their worthless wives behind.

In due time they drew near to their father’s home. The night before they were to arrive, when the youngest brother was asleep, the eldest said to the other nine, “Let us kill our youngest brother. He will gather all the praise, and what will be left for us?”

At first the others refused, saying, “He has brought us back to life. We must not do this thing.”

In the end the first brother prevailed upon the rest, saying, “He will be the favourite with our father, and it will end in death for us.”

So, before their village came in sight on the following day, they took him behind an anthill and strangled him, saying nothing to the Queen. Then they went to her and said that he had been bitten by a snake, and was dead. Whereupon she stopped shining like the sun; the Magic Drum ceased playing, and the Golden Birds were silent.

Then the eldest brother said to the Queen, "It is of no account, *I will marry you.*"

It so happened that when the Queen left her Golden City, she had taken her little dog with her. This dog now refused to leave the body of her dead husband, and stayed on guard by his side, while the others continued their journey to the village of their father.

When they arrived, the Queen was still crying, the Drum was silent, and the Birds had ceased singing, so that when the eldest son said to his father, "Here are the Golden Birds you told us to bring to you," the chief answered, "These are not the birds I want. Where is their song? Where is their cloth? And who is this woman?"

To this the eldest son replied, "She is my wife."

"Where is my youngest son?" the chief then asked.

When the brothers told him that he was dead, the old man was overcome with grief.

Meanwhile the little dog found that his master would not move, so he licked his face and breathed into his nostrils, bringing life back into his body. So he soon lived again, and together they went to the father's village.

As they reached the father's hut where all were assembled, the Queen commenced to shine like the sun, the Magic Drum began to play, and all the Golden Birds burst into song. The chief and his people were amazed, and turning saw the youngest son, who they had been told was dead.

The ten brothers were now afraid, for they knew that their father would hear the truth. "We will be killed," they said.

After greeting his father, the youngest son gave him the many treasures that he had brought with him, and asked for



the people to be called together to hear his tale. This he told to them and the other ten brothers were held up to ridicule.

The chief's anger at their wickedness knew no bounds, and he had them all put to death. Then he called the youngest to him and said, "My son, I am old. It is my wish that you should take my place. *You* are now the chief."

Amidst great splendor and celebration the youngest son was therefore acclaimed as chief by all the people, and from that day until his death the Golden Birds supplied their clothing needs; the Magic Drum played; and the Golden Queen shone with love for him. He lived a long and happy life and was loved by all, ruling wisely and well until the end.

THE BLIND MAN AND THE TORTOISE

THERE ONCE LIVED A BLIND MAN who for a long time had been a burden to his people, since they had to do everything for him. Added to this, they had no love for him, for he was greedy beyond endurance.

One day he was sitting sunning himself on the outskirts of the village, when he heard a voice nearby say, "Oh for arms and legs that would enable me to climb a tree!"

"Who is this who has no arms and legs?" he asked. "I thought that *my* affliction was great, but surely yours is greater? And why do you want to climb a tree?"

"It is I, Fulwe," answered the tortoise. "Arms and legs I have, sure enough, but not of a length that will enable me to climb trees to reach my favourite food."

"What is this favourite food of which you speak?" asked the blind man. "I have arms and legs with which to climb, and I too like the good things of life, though in my blindness I fail to see them."

"It is the crop the bees harvest — honey," answered the tortoise. "Can you not hear our hot-tailed friends singing as they come home laden with its sweetness?"

"I *hear* them," dolefully replied the blind man, "but of what use is that to me, when I cannot see to guide my steps to their honey-store?"

"Yes," said the tortoise, "that is so, but could we not strike a bargain, you and I? I have the eyes with which to see them. You have the arms and legs with which to climb the trees. Once up the tree," he added, "your nose would guide you to the honey-store, and you could do the robbing. We could then share the plunder. Let us form a partnership, and daily we will walk through the forests, my eyes guiding your steps, and your skill robbing the hives."

"That," said the old man, "is wisdom indeed. Each will benefit from what the other lacks." Whereupon he put the tortoise on his shoulder, and following Fulwe's directions, they set off towards the forest.

"Stop!" called out the tortoise after a while. "Bees are flying overhead; we are near a honey tree."

"Good," said the old man, slowing down his pace, "Let us search."

Soon the tortoise saw the bees making for a large dead tree. He directed the blind man to it, and there his partner put him down.

"Now," said the blind man, "listen carefully to what I say. New wood makes the densest smoke; therefore first gather some green wood, and build a small fire at the base of the tree. The smoke will stupefy the bees and put them to sleep, and then I may safely rob them."

Carefully the tortoise obeyed the old man's instructions, and as soon as the thick smoke had produced the desired re-

sult, the blind man felt his way up the tree and, guided by the smell of honey, he reached the trunk in which the bees had made their honeycombs. By much tapping with his little axe, he soon found the hollow part, and chopped his way through to the honey.

To the tortoise's dismay his partner failed to drop his share of dripping combs for him to eat. Instead he sat up in the tree and, with a great smacking of lips and grunts of pleasure, he ate, and ate, and *ate*.

"Heya!" called the tortoise. "Give me some, that I may eat also!"

But the blind man answered, "When I am eating sweet things, I cannot understand." And he finished all the honey, leaving nothing for his partner. Then he climbed down from the tree, and putting the tortoise once more on his shoulder to guide him, returned to the village.

The following day the old man called the tortoise to him, and putting him on to his shoulder said, "Let us seek some more honey."

He walked through the forest, again using Fulwe as his eyes, until the tortoise said, "Stop, I see bees." Once more they found the right tree, and once more the tortoise built the little fire of green wood against the base of the tree, and once more the old man robbed the hive; but never a drop of honey did he give to the tortoise for his share in the partnership. Always his reply to the tortoise's requests was the same, "When I am eating sweet things, I cannot understand." Therefore, hungry and sad, Fulwe guided him back to the village.

Several times the same thing happened, until at last Fulwe could no longer keep his sorrow to himself. He ap-





proached the village elders and told them of his unfair treatment, and of how he had been cheated of his share in the honey.

“Very well,” said the elders, after much discussion, “treat him as he has treated you.” Whereupon they told him of a plan that would bring about the old man’s punishment.

Therefore, when the tortoise's partner called him for another honey feast, he gladly agreed to go, and perched as usual on the blind man's shoulder as they set off through the forest on their search.

In time Fulwe called out, "Stop, I see bees flying overhead," and as before, under the tortoise's guidance they located the tree in which the bees had stored their honey.

Quickly the tortoise gathered the usual green wood and made the smoke-fire, while the old man climbed the tree, tapping with his little axe until he found the hollow trunk, and commenced to chop away the bark to expose the comb.

But the tortoise did not stop, as before, and wait for his share. Instead, he hastily gathered a big pile of *dry* wood, and stoked up his fire until the tall flames licked at the trunk above him, and set fire to its dry bark.

"Heya!" called out the old man. "Do not make more fire, or I will be burned up here."

Fulwe replied, "When I am making a fire, I do not understand." Higher and higher he piled the dry wood until the old man, thoroughly toasted, fell into the flames below and was burned to death.

Fulwe walked the many miles back to the village on his own short legs, to report the circumstances of the death of the old man. On the following day the elders held a conference to try the tortoise for his deed. In the end it was decided that Fulwe had acted under great provocation, and that as he was only taking his just revenge, he should be allowed to go free and unpunished.



MUSAKALALA, THE TALKING SKULL

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS a very bad drought on the high plateau land of the Congo Border, and daily the pangs of hunger bit deeper and deeper into the people of that area. So bad did the situation become that people foraged far afield for what they could find in the way of food — roots of the Mufunga tree, rats and mice that came their way — in fact, anything that would help to fill their empty stomachs.

On one such expedition, Mubanga, one of those who hungered, ventured much farther than before in his search, into a deep, silent forest. Soon a white and shining object at the base of a tall tree caught his attention. He went closer, thinking it might be something to eat. However, it was only an old human skull, and he was about to pass it by when, to his amazement, the jaw moved and the skull addressed him.

“What are you seeking so far from home?” it asked. “It is seldom indeed that I have a visitor in this lonely place.”

"I search for the wherewithal to live," Mubanga replied, "roots, perhaps, or maybe a bird. Even a beetle would be welcome, it is so long since I have eaten. From where I come all are starving, for no rain has fallen for many moons."

"I must not send my visitor away with an empty stomach," said Musakalala the Skull. "If I give you food, will you keep a quiet tongue in your head?"

"I surely will," Mubanga replied, scarcely able to contain himself for joy, "and I will call down blessings for your goodness."

"Very well," the Skull continued, "go behind this tree and you will find as much mumba (a small kind of pumpkin) as you can eat — but mind, not one smallest particle must you take away."

Mubanga lost no time in reaching the other side of the tree, and there, sure enough, was all the mumba he could wish, and he ate his fill. He then returned to the Skull, thanked him for his kindness, and asked if he could come back on the following day.

"Yes," said Musakalala, "providing that you hold to my condition."

Mubanga went home, and kept his good fortune to himself, and the next day he again ate his fill behind the same big tree. When he was satisfied, he sat for a while, talking to the Skull, before returning to his home. Needless to say, he repeated his visits daily, and always he sat down for a chat with his host before returning to his kraal.

One day he asked, "What killed you, Skull, at the root of this tree?"

Musakalala replied, "My mouth killed me."

"Your *mouth*?" laughed Mubanga. "Surely you joke with me! How *could* your mouth have killed you?"

"I can assure you it *did* kill me," answered the Skull, but would say no more.

Mubanga could not understand, and went home wondering. Many times after this, he asked the Skull the same question, but always he got the same reply.

In time his secret grew too heavy for him to carry, and, thinking of the favour he would win from his chief, he told him of the food store, and of the talking skull.

The chief was much impressed and said, "My power and my prestige would be greatly increased in all the land, could I but possess a talking skull. I will send my warriors with you to fetch this thing to me."

He called his armed men, and with Mubanga to guide them, they set off to the forest to bring Musakalala to him.

When they reached the big tree, to Mubanga's surprise and dismay, there was no sign of the talking skull, nor, when he went behind the tree, was there any food.



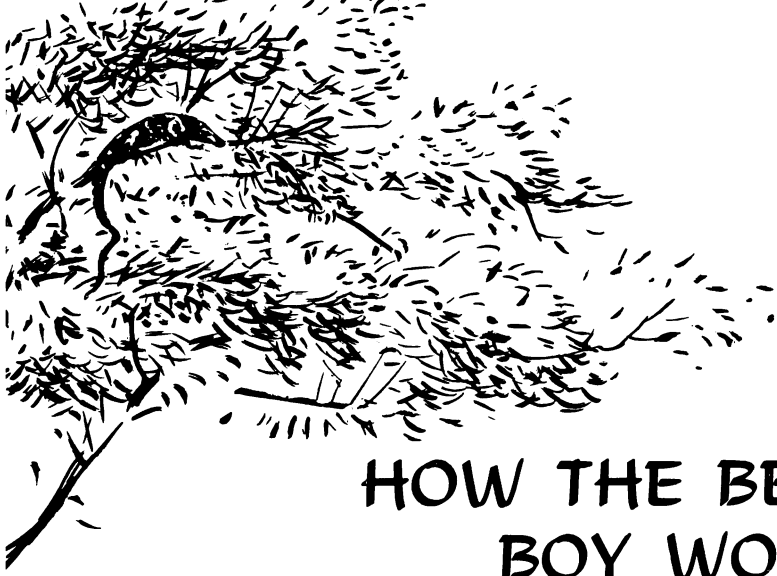
The warriors were very angry, and accused Mubanga of making a fool of his chief. They tied his hands behind him and dragged him back to the village, where they told their lord of their fruitless search.

The chief, too, was angry. "So you would make a mock of me?" he cried. "Very well, go and join your talking skull." And he told his warriors to take Mubanga back to the forest, and to put him to death at the foot of the spreading tree.

This they did, and as he lay there dying, after the warriors had done their chief's bidding, he looked around him, and there again, in the same place as before, he saw Musakalala grinning at him.

"You asked me," said the Skull, "what killed me? I told you that my mouth had killed me. There you are. Your mouth has killed you too!"

Note: The exact translation of Musakalala is "skeleton."



HOW THE BEGGAR BOY WON THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER

IN THE TOPMOST BRANCHES OF A very tall tree, there lived a large and very beautiful iguana (arboreal lizard), and not far from his home was the kraal of the chief of all the country round about.

Now, daily as the chief passed along a nearby path, the lovely reptile gazed down impudently at him from above, until in time he became so fascinated and intrigued by its strange ways that he decided to capture and tame it, to keep it as a pet. He therefore gave orders to his subjects to catch and bring it to him unharmed.

One after another his men tried to do their chief's bidding, but the creature was too wise for them, neither could anyone overcome its fierceness. Besides this, the iguana had, in its wisdom, chosen for its home a tree that was almost impossible for a human being to climb.

The more difficult it became for his people to fulfill his wish, the more determined was the chief to possess this crea-

ture. In the end he sent word to all the tribes around that he would give his lovely daughter in marriage as the prize to the man who brought the iguana safely to him.

Many were the eager warriors and men who came to win the prize; and many were the snares and plans to capture the beautiful big lizard, but one by one they failed.

One day a dirty and bedraggled youth appeared at the royal kraal. His clothing was in rags, his hair unkempt, and his skin was grey with lack of care.

“What do you want?” the elders asked him harshly, ready to drive him away.

“I have come to win the hand of your chief’s lovely daughter,” answered the youth. A roar of laughter greeted his words, and the men made ready to chase him from their midst.

“Wait!” said the chief. “The boy has hands. Let us see if he has brains as well. He shall have his chance to catch the Clever One for me, and thus he may win the prize he seeks.”

They told him the chief’s conditions, and he went away, to return in time dragging a dog and a goat in one hand on ropes behind him. In his other hand he carried a pot of cassava flour and a bundle of green grass. With these he set off for the tree in which the iguana lived.

On arriving there he tied the dog to a clump of grass on one side of the tree, and the goat he tied on the other side.



He then sat down and made a fire, on which he cooked some stiff porridge from the cassava flour. When this was ready, he took it and set it before the goat, while he set the grass beside the dog.

During all this time the great lizard looked on, head first on one side and then on the other, with a very puzzled expression on its face.

But the dog refused to eat the grass, and the goat refused to eat the porridge. This made the boy very angry, and with many mutterings of annoyance, he picked up the grass and commenced to force it into the dog's mouth. But the dog again refused to eat it, for it was not his food.

Throughout all this time the iguana looked down with the greatest of interest, until at last he could hide his impatience no longer and called out, "You *fool*, you must give the grass to the goat, and the *porridge* to the dog."

But the boy made out that he could not understand, and continued to try to make the dog eat the grass.

"No, no, *no*," almost shrieked the iguana, "*not like that*."

"Well, come and show me how," said the boy, "for I cannot understand."

So down from the tree came the iguana, and taking the bundle of grass from the boy's hand, proceeded to carry it over to the goat.

It was then that the boy, quick as lightning, threw a noose around the foolish iguana, and in no time had it trussed up like a chicken. Then he carried it in triumph to the chief, while all the people marvelled at his cunning, and the chief readily handed over his daughter as he had agreed to do. And that is how it came about that a beggar boy married a chief's daughter.



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UMUSHA MWAICE, THE LITTLE SLAVE GIRL

IN CONGOLAND THERE LIVED a chief who had three wives. Two of these wives were blessed with large families — many sons and six daughters between them. The third wife, however, was childless, and was therefore despised by the other two and ridiculed for her barren state.

The six daughters were a great help and comfort to their mothers in all their domestic duties, but not one would raise a finger to help the childless wife, and life was indeed lonely for her.

One day, while drawing water at the river, the childless one wept aloud and cried, “Why is it that I have no daughter to help me in my tasks? Oh, where can I get one?”

Akakantote, the praying mantis, who personifies goodness and mercy, was nearby and heard her cries. He answered her, saying, “If you can cure my troubles, I will see that your wish is fulfilled.” He then showed her a large festering sore on his body.

The childless woman, who was kind at heart, picked up the little insect and sucked the poison from his sore, saying, "I will do not only this but more for you if you wish." The magic of her lips healed Akakantote's sore.

The mantis was delighted and said in gratitude, "You have healed me of a grievous sore. The reward for your kindness shall be the daughter you desire."

He handed her a little stick, saying as he did so, "Take this stick, and keep it from the sight of all. Put it in an earthen pot beneath your bed and leave it for three days and nights."

The woman thanked Akakantote and when she had finished drawing water from the river, she returned to her hut where she carried out the insect's instructions.

There was much merrymaking and jesting when she told of the kindness of the mantis, and the second wife laughed so loudly and taunted her so much that the chief banished this hardmouthed woman from his kraal, while he comforted the childless one, saying, "Heed not the cruelty of these heartless women, for you too are my wife, and I do not hold your barrenness against you."

Now the two cruel wives were much to each other, so the first wife took and cared for the banished wife's children, treating them as her own.

When the three days and nights had passed and no baby girl had come to her, the woman was filled with disappointment and hard thoughts towards Akakantote. One day some time later, however, she found a lovely baby girl where the stick had been, and her joy knew no bounds.

When the first wife saw the lovely child, she was filled with jealousy. "Where did you steal such a beautiful one?"

she asked, refusing to believe the story of the gratitude of the mantis.

As time wore on, the first wife grew more and more cruel to the little one's mother, until, quite consumed with jealousy, she killed her.

As she grew up, the little one cried for the gentle love and care of her mother, but the more she cried, the more the stepmother beat and ill-used her, calling her Umusha Mwaice, the "Little Slave," and making her do all the menial work a slave would do in the royal kraal.

She was daily at the mercy of the six royal sisters; she mended their beadwork, sewed their cloth; in fact she was indeed their "little slave." In this manner she grew to womanhood.

It happened that there was a chief of much account in the nearby country. He sent word to the father of the girls that he wished his noble son to choose a wife from among his many daughters, saying, "The honour I do to your realm is great, so I bid you make fitting preparations to receive my heir."

All was bustle and excitement in the royal kraal, each sister vying with the other to catch the prince's eye, and all begged their father to get them finery in preparation for the great day.

The little one made no request, thinking that there would be slight chance that one so grand would look at *her!* Before he left, however, her father called her to him and said, "When I search for finery for your half-sisters, what shall I get for you?"

"Father," she said, "if a little stick should fall onto your

path as you travel through the forest, bring me *that*. It is all I ask.”

The chief went to do the bidding of his seven daughters. He bought many beautiful things for the six arrogant ones but nothing for Umusha Mwaice. As he passed through the forest on his return, however, a twig fell from one of the trees and rested in his path. Remembering his promise he picked it up and carried it home for the little drudge.

There was much laughter amongst the sisters as she took her gift and stole away with it to her mother's grave. There, amidst her tears, she planted it, and before her eyes she watched it grow into a graceful tree. Whereupon her mother came from the grave and said, “Do not cry, daughter. What is there that I can do for you?”

Tearfully Umusha Mwaice told her long, sad tale. Then her mother gathered dew from the leaves of the magic tree, and in this she bathed her daughter, who straightway became even more beautiful than she had been before.

The leaves then turned to clothes, far finer than those which her six wicked half-sisters wore — and when her mother had dressed her in them, she sent her to the royal kraal.

On her arrival, however, her stepmother beat her, saying, “Where did you steal these clothes? They are too fine for such as *you*.” She then pulled them off her, giving them to one of her own daughters, while she sent the little drudge back to her tasks of smearing the royal floors with mud, pounding cassava (the root of the cassava plant from which cassava flour is made), and carrying out the many other duties reserved for slaves.

When all her work was done, Umusha Mwaice once more went to her mother's grave, and as she wept beside it, her mother appeared again, and listened to her tale.

Now, before the chief's first wife had killed her, her mother had owned a magic cow, and following her death it was given to Umusha Mwaice by her father, and she had cared for it.

"Go," said her mother, "and if they trouble you, seek out my magic cow, and ask her to swallow you."

This Umusha Mwaice did, and once inside the cow, her clothes were turned to purest silk, more beautiful than those that she had worn before. When the change had been completed, the cow returned her, and again she went to the royal kraal.

This time her stepmother was even more angry than before, and when she heard that the clothes had come out of the stomach of the magic cow, she went out and killed the cow, and all the people of the kraal feasted on its flesh. But Umusha was so sad she would not join the feast; instead she gathered up the bones.

Aha, she would not eat the flesh," jeered the chief's wife, "but now she picks the *bones!*" But Umusha Mwaice took no notice of her jibe, and carrying the bones to the river, threw them far out into the water. Immediately there appeared, in the place where they had fallen, some large and splendid huts, more stately than those of the royal kraal, with all things needed by a bride inside them, and food for all.

"Who owns those huts?" the chief's wife asked.

"Why, surely she who owned the cow!" replied the people of the kraal.

At this the stepmother screamed with rage, saying, "I will kill the owner of the cow, too," and taking Umusha Mwaice into the royal kitchen, she dug a hole beneath the cooking stones, and there she buried her alive.

Now, on that very day, the son of the great chief came

to choose his bride. In the royal kitchen all was bustle as they prepared the feast for him.

“Ah,” chuckled the chief’s wife, well pleased with herself, “soon our royal visitor will make his choice and who, other from amongst these six, is there for him to choose?”

As the morning wore on, some asked for the slave girl, but all who said her name were made to do her menial work. So, in fear they finally ceased to speak of her.

When the six sisters were brought before their royal visitor for him to make his choice, he passed them over one by one and shook his head. “No,” he said, “not one of these maidens pleases me. I wish to see the owner of the huts that rise from the water yonder,” and he pointed to where, among the reeds and water lilies, the beautiful huts were visible. “Find *her*, and she shall be my wife.”

All searched in vain for the little slave girl. Suddenly Mukulwe, the cock, commenced to crow, and in his crow he said, “The owner of those huts is . . .” but he did not finish the sentence because the chief’s wife interrupted loudly, saying, “I will kill that cock!”

“No, do not kill the cock,” all the people cried, for they wanted to hear the rest of the sentence.

Again the cock raised his voice. “The owner of those huts is buried under the . . .” The chief’s wife caught the cock and commenced to strangle him, but not before he had gasped out the last two words, “. . . the umafaswa,” meaning stove, or cooking stones.

Straightway a big search commenced. From kitchen to kitchen they rushed, digging beneath the cooking stones, until at last they reached the kitchen of the royal huts, and there, beneath the earth, they found the little slave girl.

When she had revived, they led her into the presence

of the son of the great chief, and at the sight of her his eyes filled with joy. Turning to his chief councillor he said, "Make haste with a message to my father. Tell him that I have found the bride of my heart, and beg him to see that fitting celebrations are held throughout our kingdom."

Umusha Mwaice's father then gave orders that feasting and celebrations should also take place throughout *his* land.

When all the preparations were completed, the noble prince married the little slave girl amidst great splendour and happiness, while the six cruel half-sisters and their wicked mother hung their heads in jealousy and anger.

Continuation of

THE TALE OF UMUSHA MWAICE, THE LITTLE SLAVE GIRL

Author's note — to be used at the discretion of the storyteller.

FOR A WHILE the bride and bridegroom made their home in the splendid house that had risen from out of the river, and the chief's wife, who was cunning as well as wicked, set about to form a plan that would bring disaster to the little bride. So she said to one of her daughters, "Go, daughter, make friends with your half-sister and bring her to think that you sorrow for your past unkindness to her. When you have gained her confidence, we will destroy her."

The daughter therefore went to visit Umusha Mwaice, saying, "Sister, surely love can grow between us, now that my mother no longer holds dominion over you?"

Umusha Mwaice had had so little love in her young life, she was overjoyed to feel that at last she would have



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someone with whom to talk, and confide the many little things that women share, so she greeted her former tormentor, and made her welcome.

When, after they had talked and gossiped for a while, the half-sister asked if she could plait her hair for her, Umusha Mwaice readily agreed. Quickly the half-sister placed herself behind the Little Slave, and drawing a magic needle from among her beaded ornaments, she drove it deep into the head of the little bride. Straightway Umusha Mwaice's shape changed to that of a brightly coloured bird, which fluttered round the inside of the hut. Soon it found the open door, and flew away into the lush greenery of the great tropical forest near at hand.

The wicked half-sister then returned to her mother, who was delighted at the tidings that she brought. Now, she thought, the chief's son will surely soon marry one of my own lovely daughters!

The chief's son, however, was inconsolable, and sadly mourned the loss of his beloved bride. "No, I will go to my grave without marrying again," he replied to all who tried to comfort him with the advice that he should find another wife, and he continued to live alone in the beautiful huts among the reeds and water lilies.

One day some of the village boys went into the depths of the green and lovely forest, armed with birdlime, for a day of sport. Many was the bird that became entangled on the sticky boughs that they prepared, and one by one they killed the little things, to roast upon the glowing embers for their evening meal.

One they caught, though, was so brightly coloured, and sang such a strange and beautiful song that they decided to keep and sell it to the sad young chief. "For," they said, "its song will comfort him."

The sad young chief was indeed pleased with the beautiful bird, and built a cage for it of thin bamboo, from which it sang to him, and brought him comfort.

Now, when the young chief's servant attended to his outside duties each day, the little bird stole from the bamboo cage, and reverting to her human form, Umusha Mwaice busied herself with all her former household duties. She cooked for her beloved husband all his favourite foods, so that when the servant came to do these things, he found that his tasks had been already done.

For many days the servant puzzled at so strange a happening, but one day he crept in unexpectedly, and caught the bird in its human form. "Ah!" he said. "You are the wife, killed by her wicked stepmother, for whom my master mourns! *You shall not return into the body of a bird!*" So saying, he held her firmly, refusing to let her go.

"Leave me, leave me," Umusha Mwaice cried. "My feathers and my bamboo cage are calling to me!" But no matter how pleadingly she begged for her release, her husband's servant held her until his master returned to his home for the midday meal.

Great was his lord's rejoicing when he found his much-loved wife, and at his touch the power of the magic needle lost its effect, and she struggled no more to reach her bamboo cage.

Once more they lived in great happiness together, but this was not to last, for Umusha Mwaice's return made her stepmother more angry even than before, and she called the same daughter to her again.

"Go," she said, "use *all* your wiles to regain the Little Slave's confidence, and I vow she will not escape me again."



Umusha Mwaice, however, was too wise to be tricked for a second time by her half-sister's soft words, so, taking a knife from her bosom, she killed her. This, done, she cut off her head and put it on the end of a long stick. "Now," she said, "the chance has come for me to take my revenge for all the wickedness my stepmother has done to me throughout my life."

She thereupon cut some juicy steaks from the dead girl's hips, and these she cooked with herbs and spices, making a tasty dish. When this was done she sent word to her stepmother and her father to share a meal with her. Readily the stepmother accepted the invitation, thinking that surely her plans were taking shape.

"Father," said Umusha Mwaice, as they sat down to eat after the normal pleasantries had taken place, "today I have prepared for you a meal of your favourite fish. The meat is for your wife alone." She then waited upon them, and served them with a sumptuous meal.

After they had eaten, and had expressed their satisfaction at her fare, she went to an adjoining hut, and returned with the long stick with her half-sister's head spiked on it. She laid it at her stepmother's feet, saying as she put it down, "You have eaten your daughter; I am glad that you enjoyed your meal!"

At this the wicked woman wept bitterly, but all the people of the village jeered at her when they heard of the Little Slave's revenge, and comforted Umusha Mwaice, saying that the chief's wife well deserved the punishment that had come to her, for her persecution of her husband's child.

In fear of losing her once more, the chief's son took Umusha Mwaice back to his own country, where together in great happiness they lived to a ripe old age among their children and their children's children.

GLOSSARY

- Akakantote** The Praying Mantis. A small insect that is credited by many tribes (not only in Africa) with supernatural powers. In the area from which these tales come, it personifies goodness and mercy.
- Anthill** The big "hill" of earth made by the excavations of the "white ant" or termite.
- Chief** Leader of the community.
- Eland** The largest of the African antelopes.
- Gourd** The dry shell of a pumpkin-like vegetable, used by African tribes to carry and store liquids.
- Kraal** A collection of huts. A village.
- Lion-man** In many parts of Africa human beings are credited, even today, with the ability to change at will from man to beast, and back from beast to man. There are also supposed to exist Leopard-men, Crocodile-men, Hyena-men, Baboon-men, etc.
- Many moons** A period of time. A moon representing a month.

Marriage price	Among the Bantu tribes wives are “bought” from the father, or if the father is deceased, from the nearest paternal relative. The price and the currency is varied, consisting often of cattle, goats, and even in olden days of “jimbu” shells (a type of sea shell).
Mubanga	Mu-banga. A name.
Mufunga tree	Mu-funga. A variety of tree with edible roots.
Musakalala	Musa-ka-lala. A skeleton.
Nephew	An affectionate way of addressing his companion.
Reedbuck	A type of African antelope, the size of a donkey.
Scabies	A skin disease.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

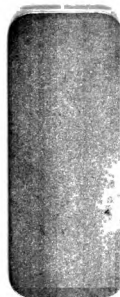
- Sound a . . . as “u” in *much*.
 Sound c . . . as “ch” in *ch* in *church*.
 Sound e . . . as “y” in *very*.
 Sound i . . . as “ee” in *feet*.
 Sound u . . . as “oo” in *soot*.
 Sound all others as in English.

Umúsha Mwáice (ai as “i” in *sight*) Musákalála
 Mukúlwe Mubánga
 Umafáswa Mámobilímba
 Mufúnga *Accent on syllables stressed.*

Because of foreign publication, the British spelling of such words as *favour*, *splendour*, etc. is used.

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